THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) As per Crop Weather Watch Group (CWWG), the overall position in 70 important reservoirs of the country continues to be critical. The total live storage in 70 important reservoirs in different parts of the country, monitored by the Central Water Commission for the week ending 21.02.2003 was 34.56 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) (26 per cent of the storage capacity at full reservoir level) as against 46.46 BCM on the corresponding date of previous year and 58.61 BCM the average storage for the last 10 years.The storage was less than the last year's position by 11.90 BCM and less than average of last ten years storage by 24.06 BCM. Low storage in the reservoirs is mainly due to deficit monsoon during the year.

(c) and (d) Irrigation being a State subject, the responsibility of planning, investigation, funding alongwith priority, execution, operation and maintenance of irrigation projects, including irrigation and flood control primarily rests with the concerned State Governments themselves. Hence, the Central Government has not issued any direction for desilting of reservoirs.

Seeking the US expertise for inter-linking of rivers

1376. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India can emulate Texas, which had an agreement with Mexico for sharing water as a flood control programme, by linking up its major rivers;

(b) whether Government propose to seek the US expertise to help India in the gigantic task of linking its major rivers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) The project of linking of major rivers under National Perspective Plan (NPP) being studied by NWDA is a mega project in view of unprecedented size of the scheme and complexity of water transfer involved. The scheme can draw on experience of the Texas plan in terms of proposed quantum of water transfer and network of canals across the length and breadth of the country,

lifts involved etc. The project can be implemented with the technical know-how and expertise available within the country. There are many schemes executed in India for diversion of water from a basin to another like Parambikulam-Aliyar, Telugu Ganga Canal etc. and that experience would certainly help in the planning and execution of the link projects.

Diversions of river water in Kerala

1377. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are six illegal diversions of Bhavani river water above the Attapady Hills flowing to Kerala resulting in acute water shortage in the tribal belt;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether the waters of Varagar and Kodunagarapallam were diverted to the Kunha hydel-cum-imgation project making both the rivers dry, creating acute water shortage in Attapadi Valley;

(d) whether the competent authority in Kerala brought the above illegal diversions to the notice of the competent authority; and

(e) if so, the action taken against the above diversions in details?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c)The State of Tamil Nadu before 1956 constructed upper Bhavani dam in the upper reaches of Bhavani river for diversion of 3 Thousand Million Cubic feet (TMC) of water to Kundah river, a northern tributary of Bhavani river having most of its catchment in Tamil Nadu. After 1956, the State of Tamil Nadu constructed East Varagarpallam and West Varagarpallam dams on East Varagar and West Varagar tributaries of Bhavani for diversion of 0.004 TMC of water to Kundah river. Besides, the State of Tamil Nadu diverts 2 TMC of water at Chaliar to Kundah.

(d) and (e) As per the decisions taken by the Chief Ministers of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the presence of Union Minister of Irrigation and Power in the discussions held on 10.5.1969 at Trivandrum, Kerala was permitted to utilize 2.5 TMC of water in Bhavani for irrigating Attapadi Valley land after the construction of Siruvani reservoir. However, the State